



Laboratory Director John Grossenbacher (second from right) hosted Idaho Senators Jim Risch (r) and Mike Crapo (second from left) on an INL tour with Ohio Senator George Voinovich (middle) Monday.

## Deputy secretary, U.S. senators learn about INL nuclear energy research

by [Nicole Stricker](#) and Glen Tait, *INL Communications & Public Affairs*

The Department of Energy's second in command toured Idaho National Laboratory Monday, along with three U.S. senators. Both tours provided a chance for these VIPs to learn more about INL's energy technology and security research capabilities.

[Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman](#), who reports directly to [Energy Secretary Steven Chu](#), requested a tour of INL as part of travels throughout the West this week. And [U.S. Sen. George Voinovich](#) of Ohio toured INL with Idaho's two U.S. senators, [Mike Crapo](#) and [Jim Risch](#), and several members of Risch's staff. Throughout the day, both groups received briefings about INL energy research, national and homeland security projects, and educational outreach efforts.

[INL Laboratory Director John Grossenbacher](#), who hosted parts of both tours, said the visits showed that, "INL is at the center of the national effort to bring advanced, environmentally sensitive energy technologies to the American consumer."

The senators' group toured INL's [Advanced Test Reactor \(ATR\)](#) Complex to see new buildings and learn about the reactor's new Hydraulic Transfer Shuttle Irradiation Facility, also known as the "rabbit" capability. The ATR rabbit will allow for easier production of medical isotopes by allowing insertion of materials into the reactor core without curtailing reactor operation.



*INL's Mike Goff (r) leads Poneman and Hill (l) through the Hot Fuel Examination Facility at INL's Materials & Fuels Complex.*



*INL's Stephen Johnson (l) shows Poneman (r) a mock nuclear heat source at INL's Space & Security Power Systems Facility.*

During the tour, INL staff thanked Risch for his support of the project. As governor of Idaho in 2006, Risch used funds from the [1995 Settlement Agreement](#) between Idaho and the Department of Energy to expedite installation of the rabbit, which is now being marketed to potential isotope production customers.

"I have been to the Advanced Test Reactor several times, and every time I learn new things," Risch said. "I always come away from a visit realizing how important the ATR is to other scientific endeavors, and I strongly support that."

Poneman's tour introduced him to INL's mission, programs and research activities. Idaho's [U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson](#) joined Poneman for a breakfast briefing before the deputy secretary visited INL's [Materials and Fuels Complex](#). Poneman returned to Idaho Falls to join the senators for a lunchtime briefing about INL's national and homeland security work and the role INL researchers are playing supporting the U.S. nuclear renaissance.

Members of both groups visited the Bonneville County Technology Center (BCTC) after lunch, where they learned about INL's advanced vehicle program and high-temperature electrolysis for the production of hydrogen. The senators also learned about the [Energy Systems Technology and Education Center \(ESTEC\)](#) that INL co-sponsors with Idaho State University. Poneman learned how the [Center for Advanced Energy Studies](#), a partnership between INL and Idaho's three public universities, is advancing energy research at U.S. universities.

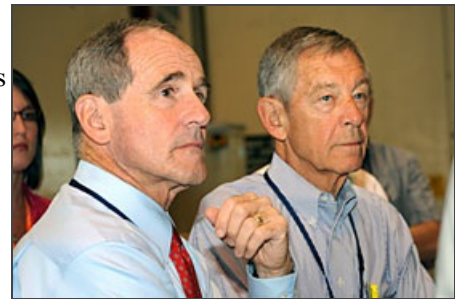
Both groups also received briefings from K.P. Ananth, associate laboratory director for [INL's National & Homeland Security](#) directorate, about INL's important national security work. Voinovich is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and is the ranking Republican on the [Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee](#), which sets funding for the [Department of Homeland Security](#).

"It has been a very exciting day," Voinovich said Monday evening. "I have gotten some new ideas here, and I want to continue to help move along the nuclear renaissance."

Crapo thanked Voinovich for taking a day to tour INL.

"It's been a fabulous, stellar day," Crapo said. "I am proud to represent INL and its fine researchers and staff in the U.S. Senate."

[Feature Archive](#)



***Idaho's U.S. Senator Jim Risch (l) and Ohio's U.S. Senator George Voinovich learned about numerous INL programs during their recent tour.***